

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ROME

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CVIS, IT

SUBJECT: VISAS FOR ITALIAN COMMUNISTS

1. CESARE MERLINI OF THE ISTITUTO AFFARI INTERNAZIONALI TELEPHONED COUNSELOR SONNENFELDT SEPTEMBER 12, AND IN THE LATTER'S ABSENCE SPOKE WITH SONNENFELDT'S SPECIAL ASSISTANT. MERLINI NOTED THAT IN THE LETTER OF AUGUST 28 HE HAD RECEIVED FROM SONNENFELDT, HE HAD BEEN GIVEN TO UNDERSTAND THAT THE USG WAS UNLIKELY TO GRANT VISAS TO MEMBERS OF THE PCI TO ATTEND THE UPCOMING CONFERENCE IN THE US BEING ORGANIZED BY THE ISTITUTO AND THE COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS. MERLINI INQUIRED WHETHER THERE WAS ANY FLEXIBILITY IN THIS DECISION AND WAS TOLD THERE WAS NOT. HE WAS TOLD THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE WOULD NOT RECOMMEND WAIVERS ON VISA APPLICATIONS OF PCI OFFICERS OR MEMBERS WHO INTENDED TO TRAVEL TO THE US IN ORDER TO REPRESENT THAT PARTY IN ANY MANNER. THIS WOULD APPLY REGARDLESS OF THEIR RANK OR POSITION IN THE PCI. MERLINI WONDERED WHETHER PCI OFFICERS OR MEMBERS MIGHT BE GIVEN VISAS AS JOURNALISTS

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AND WHILE HERE PARTICIPATE IN THIS CONFERENCE. HE WAS

TOLD THAT THIS WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE. IN ORDER TO ENTER ON A JOURNALIST VISA, THE APPLICANT MUST CONFINE HIS ACTIVITIES IN THE US TO JOURNALISM, WHICH IN OUR VIEW WAS RESTRICTED TO OBSERVING AND REPORTING ON EVENTS AND NOT PARTICIPATING IN THEM.

2. MERLINI SAID THAT THIS DECISION WOULD BE MOST UNPOPULAR AND THAT SOME OF THE NONCOMMUNIST MEMBERS OF THE ITALIAN DELEGATION TO THIS CONFERENCE MIGHT NOT NOW COME AS A PROTEST AGAINST THIS USG DECISION. HE SAID THAT SINCE A MEETING BETWEEN US ACADEMICS AND PCI REPRESENTATIVES WAS INEVITABLE, THIS US DECISION WOULD ONLY GIVE IT ADDED PUBLICITY AND SIGNIFICANCE. MERLINI WAS TOLD THAT SUCH A MEETING COULD, OF COURSE, TAKE PLACE AT ANYTIME IN ITALY, BUT THAT THERE WAS NO LIKELIHOOD OF IT TAKING PLACE IN THE US IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. KISSINGER

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